

Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 AID-05 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 COME-00 TRSE-00 XMB-04 FRB-01

CIEP-02 OES-05 /066 W
----- 094506

R 191835Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9628

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 4746

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, ES

SUBJECT: OPIC INVESTMENT MISSION - EL SALVADOR VISIT

SUMMARY: A WEARY INVESTMENT MISSION STAGGERED INTO SAN SALVADOR, NOV 12, FOR A TWO DAY VISIT AND THE LAST STOP ON THEIR CENTRAL AMERICAN TOUR. THE GROUP SEEMED TO REGAIN ITS STRENGTH DURING EARLY MORNING EMBASSY BRIEFING, AND LUNCH HOSTED BY THE SALVADORAN INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION. AFTER LUNCH, PACE PICKED UP DURING A FRANK 3 1/2 HOUR WORKING MEETING WITH SEVEN CABINET-LEVEL GOES OFFICIALS, THE HIGH POINT BEING A 15 MINUTE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT MOLINA WELCOMING FOREIGN INVESTMENT. THE PRESIDENT THEN REMAINED TO FIELD QUESTIONS FROM THE MISSION. THE CLOSELY PACKED SCHEDULE ENDED WITH AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION. MORNING OF NOV 13 BEGAN WITH BREAKFAST HOSTED BY AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. MISSION MEMBERS THEN SET OUT ON INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS. MISSION WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY BOTH THE ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION THEY RECEIVED AS WELL AS THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY. SEVERAL MEMBERS INDICATED THAT THEY PLAN TO RETURN TO EL SALVADOR. END SUMMARY.

1. NOVEMBER 12 1 THE MISSION, IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL, WAS TAKEN
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TO EMBASSY FOR TWO HOUR SESSION WITH AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY STAFF,

AFTER WHICH THEY DEPARTED FOR LUNCH HOSTED BY SALVADORAN INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION AND THEIR FIRST CONTACT WITH LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY. DURING LUNCH, GROUP RECEIVED A DETAILED PRESENTATION ON DOING BUSINESS IN EL SALVADOR. THIS FIRST MEETING WENT WELL, WITH BOTH SIDES APPEARING EAGER TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS DURING THE NEXT DAY'S APPOINTMENTS.

2. AFTER LUNCH, MISSION DEPARTED FOR CASA PRESIDENCIAL FOR CONFERENCE SESSION WITH MINISTERS. IN ATTENDANCE WERE FOREIGN MINISTER (WHO ACTED AS MODERATOR) MINISTERS OF ECONOMY, FINANCE AND LABOR, VICE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MINISTER WAS OUT OF COUNTRY) PRESIDENT OF CENTRAL BANK, AND DIRECTORS OF INSAFI, (INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY) CONAPLAN (ECONOMIC PLANNING ORGAN) AND ISCE (EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AGENCY). GOES TREATED SESSION AS A WORKING MEETING AND AFTER SHORT PRESENTATIONS, OPENED FLOOR TO QUESTIONS. QUESTIONS RANGED FROM LONG TERM EFFECTS OF TERRORISM, TO POPULATION PRESSURES, TO ELECTRICITY COSTS. MINISTERS HAD OBVIOUSLY DONE THEIR HOMEWORK AND RESPONDED FRANKLY AND IN DETAIL TO EVERY QUESTION. IN RESPONDING TO TERRORISM QUERY, FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT PROBLEM EXISTS IN MANY COUNTRIES, BUT IT WAS UNDER CONTROL IN EL SALVADOR, AND WHILE ISOLATED INCIDENTS BY INDIVIDUALS COULD NEVER BE COMPLETELY PREVENTED, THE LEVEL OF SUCH ACTIVITY IN EL SALVADOR IS QUITE SMALL. PRESIDENT MOLINA JOINED THE SESSION DURING THE LAST HOUR AND GAVE HIS STRONG ENDORSEMENT TO PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTMENT. MISSION CLEARLY GOT MESSAGE THAT BECAUSE OF POPULATION PRESSURES, EL SALVADOR WAS IN A RACE AGAINST TIME TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR ITS POPULATION. GOES IS ACCORDINGLY COMMITTED AND IS GAMBLING THAT JOBS, CREATED BY LABOR INTENSIVE FOREIGN INVESTMENTS WILL ASSIST IN MEETING THIS CHALLENGE.

3. NOVEMBER 13 - AFTER BREAKFAST HOSTED BY AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MISSION MEMBERS VISITED SAN SALVADOR, VISITING GOES MINISTERS, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, AND BUSINESS LEADERS.

4. RECEPTION BY BOTH GOES AND SALVADORAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS GOOD. MISSION MEMBERS SEEMED GENUINELY IMPRESSED BY WHAT THEY SAW AND HEARD IN EL SALVADOR. SEVERAL INDICATED THEY WOULD BE RETURNING TO FOLLOW UP ON CONTACTS MADE DURING MISSION VISIT, AND IT IS POSSIBLE SOME PROJECTS WILL RESULT.

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